UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1902
26 May 1995

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council strongly condemns Bosnian Serb shelling of safe areas after attack on Tuzla leaves scores dead; demands immediate release of United Nations personnel detained by Bosnian Serbs.

+ NATO launches second air strike against Bosnian Serb arms depot near Pale; Special Representative Akashi again demands compliance with agreement on heavy weapons and respect for safety of civilians.

+ United Nations and United States are immensely important to each other, Secretary-General tells Baker Institute for Public Policy.

+ UNEP plays vital role in formulating environmental policies and facilitating sustainable development, speakers tell Executive Council.

+ Special Committee on Human Rights in Occupied Territories completes field mission to Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

+ UNCTAD to hold meeting on socio-economic situation in least developed countries; issues report on role of tobacco in developing economies.

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The Security Council has strongly condemned the shelling by Bosnian Serbs of safe areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly an attack on Tuzla which left many civilians dead. In a statement to correspondents by its President, Jean-Bernard Merimee (France), the Council demanded the immediate cessation of attacks against the safe areas. It also demanded that the Bosnian Serbs take all measures to ensure full respect of the status of the safe areas. The Council stressed that relevant resolutions must be respected by all.

The Council expressed deep concern at recent totally unacceptable actions by the Bosnian Serbs gravely affecting the safety and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel. It demanded the immediate release of all the

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For information media—not an official record

personnel detained.

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In Bosnia and Herzegovina today, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) launched another air strike against a Bosnian Serb ammunition depot near Pale, destroying six bunkers. NATO aircraft destroyed two bunkers at the depot yesterday, after the Bosnian Serbs failed to heed United Nations demands for compliance with the 1994 agreement on heavy weapons.

Special Representative Yasushi Akashi said he had approved the latest NATO action after Bosnian Serb forces continued to fire weapons within the Sarajevo exclusion zone, including from inside five weapons collection points. He also said that the Bosnian Serb shelling of Tuzla had killed more than 70 people, while an attack on Gorazde had left five dead.

Mr. Akashi stressed that he had no option but to respond to a dangerous situation which threatened the entire peace process. The NATO actions were intended to restore the integrity of the agreement on heavy weapons and respect for the safety of civilians, so that the political process could be resumed. He reminded the parties once again of the extreme gravity of the situation and the urgent need to reject the military option and to resume peaceful dialogue.

A United Nations spokesman this afternoon reported that the Bosnian Serbs had taken eight United Nations military observers hostage in Pale. Meanwhile, eighty peace-keepers were being confined to, or physically restricted at, weapons collection points in Sarajevo. There were unconfirmed reports that three heavy weapons had been removed from one collection point. The spokesman went on to say that cooperation between the United Nations and NATO was extremely successful, including with respect to contingency planning for any withdrawal of peace-keepers from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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The United Nations and the United States share the same goal of a peaceful and stable international order, and are immensely important to each other, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He said the United States could work with and through the United Nations to address conflicts requiring international action at an early stage. He made those comments in an address to the Baker Institute for Public Policy in Houston, Texas, yesterday.

America's non-participation in the League of Nations had doomed that Geneva-based world organization to failure, the Secretary-General told the Baker Institute. America's decision to create and support a United Nations had led to the New York-based world Organization of today.

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"The United Nations, so much a dream and creation of the United States, is ready for use in a great common cause -- the cause of peace, development and democracy everywhere," he went on to say. "Let us not turn away from that cause. The United Nations needs your support."

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The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is a pioneering organization in a vital new field, according to Maurice Strong, UNEP's first Executive Director and Secretary-General of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Mr. Strong was one of several guest speakers during the UNEP Executive Council's two-week session in Nairobi, Kenya. He said success in tackling major environmental problems would depend upon what governments did, or failed to do, at the session.

The Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development, Henrique Cavalcanti, stressed the importance of a strong UNEP, saying it would be impossible to achieve sustainable development without proper environmental policies. As the leading United Nations authority in the field of the environment, UNEP had an irreplaceable role to play in the global effort to achieve sustainable development.

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The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories has completed a field mission to Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The Special Committee is mandated to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights situation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), and the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, and to report through the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

Members of the Special Committee said that despite the signing of the Declaration of Principles, support for the peace process would erode without progress on human rights in the occupied territories. The parties concerned must build a true culture of respect for human rights in the occupied territories, so that the people of the region could live together in dignity, peace and mutual respect.

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The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will hold a meeting of least developed countries (LDCs) and donor countries and institutions in Geneva from 29 May to 2 June. The meeting will assess the socio-economic situation in LDCs and make recommendations for accelerating the implementation of the Programme of Action for those countries for the 1990s. It will also act as the preparatory committee for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to review the Programme's implementation, to be held in New York from 26 September to 6 October.

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The United Nations currently identifies 48 countries as LDCs. Their combined population is estimated at 560 million, or one tenth of world's population. Average per capita income in 1993 was $300, compared to more than $1,100 in the developing world as a whole, and $22,000 in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.

Meanwhile, UNCTAD has issued a report on the role of tobacco in the economies of tobacco-dependent developing countries. The report reviews tobacco production, exports and export earnings by country, and deals with the issue of diversification into alternatives to tobacco cultivation.

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